CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – 08.10.2013.

Paul Elliot, Vice President, opened the meeting at 19.45 hours with 19 members present.

CHRIS HITCHEN was invited to give a display **THE PARIS POST OFFICE: 1849-51, The Period of the Grill.**

The decision to reform postal charges in France on the basis of a standard amount regardless of distance was only agreed in the summer of 1848, after stubborn resistance from the Ministry of Finance was finally overcome. January 1849 was set as the date for this momentous change but that left little time to have everything ready.

In the event only two stamps were ready in time, the 20c black intended for the inland first weight step up to 7½ grams and the 1franc carmine for the third weight step between 15 and 100 grams. To cancel these new postage stamps an anonymous grill device was devised but this was not yet available on the 1st January 1849.

For the first few days all post offices used their date stamps to obliterate the stamps. However, this was deemed insufficient and instructions were quickly issued to pen cancel the stamps as well as using the date stamp. Finally on 10th January 1849 the head office received the new grills for cancellation purposes and other offices soon followed.

February 1850 saw the issue of the 40c orange for inland second weight step letters between 7½ and 15 grams in weight. This was little used for this purpose as on 1st July 1850 postal rates were raised to 25c and 50c respectively for the first two weight stamps. The 40c found more use for foreign letters and a pair with a roller grill to London was included. The last two stamps to appear were the 15c green for local Paris letters in July 1850 and in September the 10c bistre for local letters elsewhere.

The display began with a letter of 2nd January 1849 and various examples of usage in the first few days were shown. Lack of stamps for local letters led to occasional but quite rare use of the 20c on local letters for convenience albeit at

a loss of 5c. A number of attractive local letters with the 15c followed as well as various uses of the 20c and 25c on local mail.

Registered letters cost double and examples of both the 1849 and 1850 rates were included. Whilst the 10c was intended for local letters in the provinces it could fortuitously also be used for printed matter rates which were omitted from the 1849 reforms and obituary and birth notices using this stamp in Paris completed the display.

ALAN HOLVERSON showed a variety of material on **EGYPT.**

The display of Egyptian stamps and postal history began with a brief description of the origins of the postal system which was developed by Carlo Meretti, an Italian who lived and worked in Alexandria. Meretti had heard about the great postal developments in Britain and was inspired to set up a postal courier service between Alexandria and Cairo in 1843.

The first Egyptian stamps did not appear until 1866. The background of the stamps was similar in design to Turkish stamps and were designed and produced in Genoa. The stamps were overprinted with Arabic characters which translated to “Egypt Postage & Revenue” with the bottom row giving the value also in Arabic. There were only seven values but each value was perforated in up to six different sizes. A Proof Set of the stamps was displayed.

The first “Pyramid and Sphinx stamps were produced in 1867 and together with various types of postal stationary and fiscal stamps continued to be used for the next 40 years. During this period the appointed Postmasters were an Italian, a Frenchman and then an Englishman in 1880. The appointment of the postmasters was reflected in the language used on the stamps together with Arabic. This was also the case with regard to cancellations.

For several hundred years Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire but ruled by a Sultan appointed by the Turks. However, in December 1917, by which time the Turks had sided with the Germans, Egypt was declared to be a British Protectorate and remained so until 1954.

In January 1914 a set of 10 stamps was produced depicting Egyptian historical buildings and artifacts. The set was issued again in 1921 with a new watermark. A monarchy was proclaimed in 1922 and Sultan Ahmed Faud was proclaimed King of Eygpt and all current stamps were overprinted to this effect. The following year a set of 12 stamps was issued depicting the King in military uniform.

The display ended with a number of issues commemorating congresses held in Cairo and early airmail stamp issues.

Members viewed the exhibits. The meeting closed at 21.30 hours.

By Graham Harker, Honorary Assistant Secretary
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